6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Lofiscos

[Villages of the Plains]

While I did not come to know the village well enough to be sure, my impression was that the decisive break-through in 1952 was not a matter of new knowledge or information so much as a change in financial attitudes. That is to say, before 1952 the peasants of Lofiscos looked upon indebtedness with horror. Anyone who went to a bank and of his own free will incurred a debt was, they felt, courting disaster. This was not far from the case in the 1920's and early 1930's when agricultural prices were uncertain, bank interest high, and foreclosure a possibility. In 1956 bank interest was still high – between 7 and 8 per cent for loans to individual farmers – but the price of wheat was fixed ahead of time by the government, and the price of fertilizer had been lowered by government subsidy. As a result, a simple computation could assure the borrower of what he stood to gain. This was what the farmers of Lofiscos learned in 1952. They allowed the Bank's representative to convince them that there were times and circumstances when borrowing was not the first step to perdition, but a sure (or nearly sure) way to greater income.

Farming in Lofiscos has always, for as long as men can recall, been mainly directed at market sale. Wheat from the village has gone to Volos or Larissa year after year, and, since 1920 at least, the peasants have been able to buy town products as they wanted them. But in general they have preferred hoarding to spending. In Turkish times, to build a comfortable new house or to dress elaborately would simply have attracted the attention of some hungry tax or rent collector; hence there was a strong motive for concealing behind an unpretentious, indeed poor-seeming, exterior any wealth that might accumulate. This attitude apparently survived under Greek administration, even after the peasants of the village ceased to owe rents to a landlord and secured the whole harvest as their own. It still lingers: hence the shabby appearance of the village and its inhabitants.

If the first important break with old traditional patterns of

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Greece EH1

An Ingenious Device

ashore, put off from the wharf. With some difficulty we weathered the hubbub. The usual formalities with passport officials and excisemen caused a little unavoidable delay, but at last I secured a carriage, my suitcases were put in, gratuities were distributed to all and sundry, and off I drove through the sun-bathed streets of Corfu town.

I found comfortable quarters at the Pension Suisse for the equivalent of 6s. per day, including board. The whole place was scrupulously clean. It was, however, tucked away amongst tall houses and had no outlook or view such as the Hotel Angleterre boasts and, incidentally, charges for. Compared with those in which I had been staying of late, my quarters were luxurious in the extreme, and I immediately became the complete tourist. The proprietors spoke French and English; indeed, I found one or other of these languages spoken in all the shops, hotels and cafés in the town. The intending visitor need therefore feel no anxiety on the score of language. Money need not worry him either, as here, unlike Albania, there are banks where circular notes and letters of credit can be cashed—though the process is exceedingly slow, the banking officials and clerks apparently being overcome by the lassitude induced by the climate.

The currency is Greek and consists chiefly of very dirty half-notes of five and ten drachmæ—actual value, of course, two-and-a-half and five. The observant traveller will remark that it is the left portion of the note which is in circulation and never the right, the right half having had to be, at some